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September 6, 1968

The Honorable Ivan Allen, Jr.
Mayor
City of Atlanta
City Hall
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

Subject: Bedford Pine UR Redevelopment Project

Dear Mayor Allen:

As was stated in our Conference, this project area, sometimes called Buttermilk Bottoms, contains some of the worst housing in Atlanta. Much of the worst housing was removed in clearing the land for the relief sewer and the City Auditorium. The condition of the remainder has been aggravated by the long period of waiting for Federal approval to execute the Project.

In an effort to give some relief, the following actions have been taken:

- (1) The Housing Code Department, working with our Project employees, have made and are making inspections of the buildings which appear to be in the worst condition.
- (2) As complaints are received from tenants, or representatives of tenants, the structures in which they live are also inspected.
- (3) The Housing Code Enforcement Department notifies the owner of the work which must be performed in order to correct those conditions which are an immediate threat to health or safety. Our Project employees go to the owners and attempt to persuade them to make the corrections immediately. This approach is achieving a large measure of success.
- (4) In those cases where the owner will not correct the conditions, the structure is placarded and the owner is asked to vacate the building and board it up.

- (5) In the cases of structures becoming vacant, the structures are immediately placarded so that they cannot be reoccupied, and the owner is required to board it up. All other vacant structures have been boarded up, and when evidence of someone breaking into the structure becomes apparent, the structures are reboarded.

We believe that as a temporary measure the above procedure is working. A meeting of the Community Relations Commission to hear grievances was held last night, and no grievances related to this situation were voiced.

The real solution, which should be achieved immediately, is for this Project to be in execution. Documents are pending in Washington awaiting approval. Mr. Hummel and his staff seem to be agonizing over a decision to proceed with approval due to the large amount of Federal Capital Grant required by the project. The City's one-third share of Net Project Cost appears to be in sight due to the credits for the City Auditorium and the new C. W. Hill School.

It seems to be the desire of the Federal Agency for this Project to be converted to the new Neighborhood Development Program. This would permit funding of the Federal and local shares on an annual basis, thus removing the need for a large Federal Grant reservation. Unfortunately, procedures for this conversion have not yet been written. We recommend and urge that this Project be converted to the Neighborhood Development Program within the next three to four months, particularly since the City's share is already available and established through the above mentioned improvements. It is important, however, that the Project, as now constituted, be approved without delay, with the conversion to take place later. We suggest that a letter similar to the suggested draft attached be mailed to Mr. Hummel over your signature. In addition to the letter, a personal telephone call from you to Mr. Hummel, pointing out that this is an area of acute racial tensions, and that approval is urgent, should be helpful.

Sincerely yours,



Lester H. Persells
Associate Executive Director

Enclosure